

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 TORONT 01765 152356Z

63

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02

IO-13 HEW-06 /071 W

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R 141943Z OCT 76

FM AMCONSUL TORONTO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4333

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

UNCLAS TORONTO 1765

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ELAB CA

SUBJ: LABORS DAY OF PROTEST IN ONTAIRO

REF: (A) TORONTO 1719; (B) TORONTO A-55 OF MAY 11, 1976

1. SUMMARY: DESPITE A LAST MINUTE RULING BY THE ONTAIRO LABOR RELATIONS BOARD THAT POLITICAL STRIKES ARE ILLEGAL, MANY ONTARIO UNIONS WENT AHEAD WITH THEIR WALKOUTS OCTOBER 14 TO PROTEST THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM. END SUMMARY.

2. IN A CASE BROUGHT AGAINST THE UNITED GLASS AND CERAMIC WORKERS, THE ONTARIO LABOR RELATIONS BOARD (OLRB) RULED ON OCT 13 (ONE DAY BEFORE TH DAY OF PROTEST) THAT A POLTICALLY MOTIVATED IN CASES GOVERNED BY CONTRACT, SUCH STRIKES WOULD BE CONSIDERED ILLEGAL. THE BOARD REFUSED, HOWEVER, TO GRANT THE INJUNCTION SOUGHT BY THE EMPLOYER, ARGUING THAT IF COURTS SHOULD EVENTUALLY RULE IN FAVOR OF LABOR AND UNIONS WERE PROHIBITED FROM STRIKING, THE WORKERS RIGHTS WOULD HAVE BEEN IRRETRIEVABLY LOST. THE UNION WALKED OUT ANYWAY.

3. REACTING TO THE OLRB RULING, DABID ARCHER, HEAD OF THE ONTARIO FEDERTION OF LABOR, SAID IT CAME TOO LATE: ""THE DECISIONS HAVE BEEN TAKE... THEIR RULING IS GOING TO BE APPEALED TO THE COURTS". HE SAID, " AND I THINK AN APPEAL WILL UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 TORONT 01765 152356Z

BE SUCCESSFUL".

4. IN OTHER COMMENT ON THE RULING, DENNIS MCDERMOTT, HEAD OF THE UAW, SUGGESTED THAT THE LABOR MOVEMENT CONSIDER WITHDRAWING ITS PARTICIPATION IN THE OLRB, REFERRING TO ITS "INDECENT HASTE". (ARCHER INDICATED THAT SUCH ACTION WOULD BE CONSIDERED). WILLIAM MAHONEY, PRESIDENT OF THE USW, SAW THE SILVER LINING: "REMEMBER -THEY REFUSED TO GRANT AN INJUNCTION". BUT HE WAS UNHAPPY THAT THE BOARD RULED PRIOR TO THE FACT.

5. DESPITE THE BOARD'S RULING, THE DAY OF PROTEST PROCEEDED MORE OR LESS AS EXPECTED. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ONE INTER-CITY BUS LINE, ALL TRANSPORT AND MOST OTHER PUBLIC SERVICES FUNCTIONED NORMALLY (AT LEAST IN METRO TORONTO) ALTHOUGH TRANSIT WORKERS IN SOME CASES WORE BLACK ARMBANDS OR POSTED "OPPOSED TO AIB" SIGNS ON THEIR VEHICLES. AUTO WORKERS, STEEL WORKERS WENT OUT, AS DID LOCALS OF MANY OTHER INDUSTRIAL UNIONS.

5. IN TORONTO, AN ESTIMATED 8000 PROTESTING WORKERS GATHERED IN FRONT OF THE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT BUILDING FOR AN ANTI-AIB RALLY. THIS WAS FAR FEWER THAN THE 25,000 PREDICTED AND EVEN FEWER THAN PARTICIPATED IN LAST MAY'S RALLY (REF B). FRINGE POLITICAL GROUPS (COMMUNISTS, TROTSKYITES, "GAYS AGAINST CONTROLS. AND A LONE LIVERTARIAN) WERE MORE HIGHLY VISIBLE THAN LST SPRING. FEATURED SPEAKERS WERE ONTARIO NDP LEADER STEPHEN LEWIS, WHO CALLED ON LABOR TO FOLLOW UP ON TODAY'S PROTEST WITH POLITICAL ACTION, REMINDING AUDIENCE OF PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS WITHIN A YEAR AND FEDERAL ELECTIONS IN TWO; AND CLC PRESIDENT JOE MORIS, WHO DECLARED THAT LABOR COULDN'T WAIT TWO YEARS BUT MUST CONTINUE THE PROCESS OF "POLYMERIZATION" UNTIL THE GOVERNMENT ABOLISHED ITS ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM. (FEDERAL NDP LEADER ED BROADBENT WAS UNABLE TO ADDRESS THE RALLY AS SCHEDULED).

6. ACCORDING TO EARLY REPORTS, SEVEN CHRYSLER PLANTS ACROSS ONTARIO, THE GM PLANT IN OSHAWA, AND THE AMC PLANT IN BRAMPTON WERE CLOSED (FORD WORKERS ARE STILL LAID OFF BECAUSE OF THE US STRIKE). HIGHLY UNIONIZED NORTHERN MINING CITY OF SUDBURY REPORTEDLY "COMPLETELY" SHUT DOWN.

7. FURTHER REPORT WILL DIGEST EFFECTIVENESS OF DAY OF PROTEST ELSEWHERE IN ONTARIO AS OUTLYING NEWSPAPERS BECOME AVAILABLE.
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 TORONT 01765 152356Z

DIGGINS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: UNION GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, LABOR STRIKES, LABOR UNIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 OCT 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976TORONT01765
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760388-0692
From: TORONTO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761050/aaaabrpg.tel
Line Count: 108
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 TORONTO 1719, 76 TORONTO A-55
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ullricre
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 AUG 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 AUG 2004 by schaeafaj>; APPROVED <10 DEC 2004 by ullricre>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LABORS DAY OF PROTEST IN ONTAIRO
TAGS: ELAB, CA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006